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Dear legislator,

I would like to provide testimony in opposition to HB425 and SB387 based on my personal experience over the past few years.

I have a Ph.D. in psychology and I am employed as a civilian scientist by the US Army Combat Capabilities Development Command Army Research Laboratory. Until this past December I lived in Baltimore City.

Three years ago, I took an Army small arms course so that I could better understand the physical and mental burden that warfighters face, and so that I could better shape my research to help with their decision making under stress. I came away with knowledge that helped me fabricate prototype dummy weapons for Army colleagues to evaluate future technologies like smart scopes.

Even after the Army small arms course and up to two years ago, I did not own a firearm myself. This was a very personal, risk-based decision made by myself and my wife as parents of a toddler. Things changed in early 2020, as the world became more unsettled and we saw the need to have the means for self protection in the home. I talked to a Baltimore County police officer about my concerns, and she talked me through a very balanced list of pros and cons of gun ownership. I read up on things like safe storage and how to obtain a handgun and was particularly struck by how hard it was in Maryland, especially given the need for a training course and Handgun Qualification License to obtain a handgun. At that early time in the pandemic, there was not a clear understanding of how COVID spreads and there was still a lot of fear and uncertainty about social distancing and enclosed spaces. I decided that it was not worth the risk to my family's health to take the half-day training course and linger in extremely busy gun stores, and so I gave up on that plan.

Later on, as the first COVID surge eased and outdoor range access became feasible, I started looking into picking up several AR-15s with different setups as a way to deepen my knowledge of the human factors impacting soldier performance. I found out that in Maryland it is legal for private individuals to

make their own firearms. I downloaded design files and 3-D printed a lower receiver, and completed a functional AR-15 using parts I had ordered online. It worked! I made more to do back-to-back tests of the effects of different configurations and optics. Without the ability to make my own, I would not have had the time, money, and risk budget to head to a gun store each time to buy multiple AR-15 variants.

This freedom enjoyed by most private American citizens to manufacture firearms has allowed me to better serve the people who are serving our country in uniform. And the past two years have shown me that restrictions can come in many forms, both legal and societal, sometimes justified by data and at other times only by emotion, that can make it onerous for law-abiding people who only want to learn responsibly and exercise their rights in a safe fashion without endangering others or becoming criminals.

While I understand the public safety goal of getting untraceable firearms out of the hands of criminals, I do not believe that a short grandfathering window followed by a blanket prohibition of privately-made, unserialized firearms is a reasonable way to reduce violent crime in our state. Recently, the Army sent me on an overseas assignment. My firearms are securely stored in Maryland but if this bill moves ahead, I will watch helplessly as I am turned into a criminal at the end of this year.

For these reasons, I urge you to consider voting no on HB425/SB387. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Alfred Yu